CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for controlling network access, comprising:

providing a first area for wireless access to a local area network; and

wirelessly transmitting within a second area information needed by a wireless device to gain access to the local area network, wherein at least part of the first area is outside the second area.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein transmitting the information comprises transmitting encryption key information.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein transmitting the information comprises transmitting access point information.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein transmitting the information for controlling access to the local area network comprises transmitting the information using a line-of-sight beacon.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein transmitting the information comprises transmitting the information using an optical beacon.

6. The method of claim 5, wherein transmitting the information for controlling access to the local area network comprises transmitting the information using an infrared beacon.

7. A method for accessing a network, comprising:

providing a first area for wireless access to a local area network;

wirelessly transmitting information for controlling access to the local area network within a second area, wherein at least part of the first area is outside the second area;

receiving the information in a wireless device;

initializing the wireless device to access the local area network using the information; and

accessing the local area network with the wireless device at a location within the first area and outside the second area.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein transmitting the information comprises transmitting an encryption key.

9. The method of claim 7, wherein transmitting the information comprises transmitting an access point identifier.

10. The method of claim 7, wherein transmitting the information comprises transmitting information that allows the wireless device to obtain an encryption key.

11. The method of claim 7, wherein the first area is smaller than the second area.

12. The method of claim 7, wherein the second area is within the first area.

13. The method of claim 7, wherein the second area is outside the first area.

14. The method of claim 7, wherein transmitting the information for controlling access to the local area network comprises transmitting the information using an optical beacon.

15. The method of claim 7, wherein the second area comprises a secure area.

16. The method of claim 7, wherein the second area comprises an area near a point of sale terminal.

17. The method of claim 7, further comprising charging a fee for accessing the local area network.

18. A system for providing wireless network access to at least one wireless device, comprising:

a network access circuit arrangement adapted to provide a wireless device with access to a local area network within a wireless-access area after the wireless device is configured for local area network access; and

a configuration circuit arrangement, coupled to the network access circuit arrangement, the configuration circuit arrangement adapted to wirelessly transmit within a configuration-information area information for controlling access to the local area network, wherein at least part of the wireless-access area is outside the configuration-information area.

19. The system of claim18, wherein the configuration-information area is smaller than the wireless access area;

20. The system of claim 18, wherein the configuration-information area is within the wireless access area.

21. The system of claim 18, wherein the configuration-information area is outside the wireless-access area.

22. The system of claim 18, wherein the configuration circuit arrangement is adapted to transmit encryption key information.

23. The method of claim 18, wherein the configuration circuit arrangement is adapted to transmit access point information.

24. The system of claim 18, wherein the configuration circuit arrangement is adapted to transmit information for controlling access to the local area network using an optical beacon.

25. The system of claim 18, wherein the configuration-information area is within a secure area.

26. The system of claim 18, wherein the configuration area is in proximity to a point of sale terminal.

27. A system for providing network access control information, comprising:

means for providing a first area for wireless access to a local area network; and

means for wirelessly transmitting within a second area information needed by a wireless device to gain access to the local area network, wherein at least part of the first area is outside the second area.

28. The system of claim 27, further comprising means for charging a fee in association with access by the first device to the local area network.

29. The system of claim 27, further comprising means for restricting access to the second area.

30. A system for accessing a network, comprising:

means for providing a first area for wireless access to a local area network;

means for wirelessly transmitting information for controlling access to the local area network within a second area, wherein at least part of the first area is outside the second area;

means for receiving the information in a wireless device;

means for initializing the wireless device to access the local area network using the information; and

means for accessing the local area network with the wireless device at a location within the first area and outside the second area.